

GUIDELINES FOR GRAVEL EXCAVATION FOR CONSUMPTIVE USE

Creek gravel is used by road departments and landowners for a variety of uses. If done incorrectly, excavation of gravel can result in serious stream impacts by eliminating aquatic habitat and by causing channel instability. Keep in mind that removing point bars will do little to improve stream flow or stabilize stream banks. Likewise, shoving creek rock onto stream banks will not provide long-term bank stabilization. In addition, in-stream activities that significantly increase sedimentation or alter stream flow are violation of state water quality standards and may be subject to enforcement action.

The following measures may be used to obtain gravel from stream channels in a manner that minimizes impacts to the resource:

- 1) Gravel excavation should be conducted outside of the stream flow and should be restricted to gravel bar areas.
- 2) Gravel excavation should be conducted only during low-flow, preferably during late Summer or Fall.
- 3) Gravel excavation should not be conducted during fish spawning season (April 15th to June 15th).
- 4) Only the top of the gravel bar should be excavated (i.e., the portion of the bar more than 12 inches about the water surface).
- 5) A buffer of ten (10) feet should be maintained between the shoreline and the work area.
- 6) Gravel should not be stockpiled within the stream channel, but rather removed in a “one-step” manner. The work area should be smoothed over at the end of the day.
- 7) The frequency of excavation should be limited to the extent possible. For example, remove gravel once during the year and stockpile it at an upland location. Then obtain gravel from the stockpile as needed.
- 8) To promote bank stability, the removal of stream-side vegetation should be kept to a minimum.
- 9) Streams should not be used as roads to access work areas, except where access is limited to a single perpendicular (90 degree) crossing. The work area should be access from land where possible.

NOTE: Many stream are too small to accommodate gravel excavation in an environmentally sound manner.